

# Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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## The Power of Love Divine

There is an old legend of an infidel soldier of the middle ages who hated the Bible and all things sacred. He grew so fierce and mad in his defiance that he determined to test the power of the Christian's God. So he went out into a field, armed as if for battle. He threw his glove down on the ground as a challenge. Then he looked up into heaven and angrily cried: God, if there be a God, I defy thee here and now to mortal combat. If thou art indeed, put forth thy power of which thy pretended priests make such boast. As he spoke he saw a piece of paper in the air just above his head. It fell at his feet. He took it up, and on it read these words: "God is love." Overcome by this strange response to his mad challenge he broke his sword in token of surrender, and kneeling upon the fragments, gave his life thenceforth to the service of that God whom he had just defied. It is only a legend, but it illustrates God's marvelous love in response to man's hate. For long ages God was trying to teach the world that he was love and that he had only love in his heart for poor lost sinners, but the world failed to realize or believe it. With it all wickedness multiplied, and in response to long years of disobedience, heartless unbelief, and reckless fighting against God, the longsuffering God came from far away and met the awful, threatening, defiant wickedness of a lost and despairing world, with an exhibition of love that has been the wonder and admiration of the world thro all the years of the Christian era. He came, not with fiery judgments, instrument of torture and by his omnipotent power annihilate the race; but he came, blessed be his name, he came so far, even from the far off depths of eternity, and worked out a scene in human history so transcendent, so powerful, so far-reaching, so morally transforming, and the secret of it all is comprehended in the love which passeth understanding, and of which the highest and sublimest expression is the Christ of God lifted up on the cross, dying the innocent for the guilty.

Among the moral influences or forces which operate for good in this world the element of love reigns

supreme. Far above all others the Apostle Paul declares that among the graces or virtues which rule love is the greatest. The most exalted conception of God is that he is love, and the highest and sublimest grace that rules in the universe of God is the element of love. The love of God, says the apostle, constrains us. Marvelous is the power of love, even of human love. Love always wins, it is a conquering power that never fails. Who can measure the power of a mother's love? Where will she not go, and what will she not do, in self-sacrificing devotion, in the surrender of life, under the mighty sway of love. Infinitely greater is the love which reigns in the crucified and triumphant Christ. We can understand a mother's love, great as it is, the devotion of that heart which loved us before we were born, which pressed us to its bosom and watched over us during the years of our helpless infancy, the love which hid all our faults and shortcomings, which plead in our behalf when justice demanded punishment, and which blest us with its expiring breath. This is human love, the love of a mother for her offspring, and we can understand something of its nature, great and sublime as it is; but who can measure the length and breadths, the heights and depths, of that love which travailed for us in the death pangs of the cross, and in all the years of our ingratitude and sin, has wooed and waited to put the blessed doctrine of salvation into our hearts and upon our lips. This is the love and devotion that shine forth in heavenly light and beauty from the cross of Christ. This, too, is the love that will eventually win the world to Christ. Jesus declared that if he be lifted up will draw all men to him. There are many elements of attraction in the uplifted Christ, but the one which reigns supreme above all others is love. This is the mighty weapon with which Christ will conquer the world. He is making good his word today; his promises must stand. It remains for the church, for the Christian ministry, to hold up to a dying world the Christ of God whose advent into this lost and sinful world is the highest exhibition of the eternal love of God. Let the pulpit proclaim this gospel of love, and let the church *live* it, and its drawing power will be irresistible.